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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE DISTR. 12 November 1948

SUBJECT Proposed Revival of the SPD in the Soviet Zone

NO. OF PAGES 1

25X1C

Document No.	010
No Change in Class.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Declassified	
Class. Changed To:	TS S C
Auth:	HQ 102
Date:	28/05/78
By:	029

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. 25X1X

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1. There was a meeting of the Landesvorstand of the Berlin SPD on 2 October 1948. Pieck, Grotewohl, and Ulbricht, as well as the regular members of the Landesvorstand, attended the meeting. One of the subjects of discussion was the effect of the recent discrimination against SED members who had been in the SPD.

Apparently the present plan of action now includes a revival of the SPD in the Eastern Zone. A semblance of an opposition party is needed, especially in view of the Berlin situation, in order to counteract the general impression that the SED is stifling all other political parties. It is believed that, after three years of experience in maintaining a strict surveillance over the SED functionaries, it is now safe to allow the revival of the SPD, with similar surveillance. It would not be advisable for well known SED (ex-SPD) members to become prominent within the revived SPD, because the political implications would be too obvious.

3. The first step toward this goal would be to create the general impression that the SPD itself is looked upon with favor in the East, that it is merely the anti-Soviet factions in the pay of the Western Powers that are discriminated against. In Berlin an effort would then be made to reach a rapprochement with the SPD, not the present organization, of course, but a modified pro-Soviet SPD faction.
4. In view of this pending action, the Russians have ordered that the arrest of SPD members in the Eastern Sector of Berlin be halted. Many of the minor officials of this category are now being interviewed to see whether they will be suitable for service with the revived SPD. It is expected that the SPD members in the Eastern Sector will cooperate, especially as winter progresses, and as they receive less and less material support from the western zone SPD.

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5. The SED officials believe that, if they can create a pro-Soviet SPD, they will undermine the Allied position in Berlin, and

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